

For immediate release

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(Washington, D.C.) - U.S. Congressman Albio Sires (D-NJ) supported the National Highway Bridge Reconstruction and Inspection Act of 2008 that amends the Highway Bridge Program and the National Bridge Inspection Program to improve the safety of Federal-aid highway bridges. This bill strengthens bridge inspection standards and processes and will also increase investment in the reconstruction of structurally deficient bridges on the National Highway System.

The National Highway and Bridge Reconstruction and Inspection Act of 2008 (H.R. 3999) will require a system to be developed to assign a risk-based priority to repair, rehabilitate, or replace each structurally deficient or functionally obsolete bridge. It will establish a new level of accountability in bridge repair and replacement by requiring that bridges that are the most critical to safety are upgraded and inspected more frequently.

The bill passed in the House of Representatives on July 24, 2008 with overwhelming support, and now will be sent for consideration in the Senate.

The 13th Congressional is highly impacted by the structural integrity of its bridges. They provide the necessary infrastructure to support one of the largest ports in the US with more than 25 million tons of cargo moving through the ports each year. These bridges serve millions of people who travel on them in-state and to and from New York City each year. "In response to the tragic I-35-W bridge collapse in Minneapolis, Minnesota, I am proud to say New Jersey undertook an extensive review of bridges and identified the improvements required to bring all

of the state's bridges to a state of good repair" stated Congressman Sires. "This bill helps to further that initiative and increase the safety of our bridges", added Congressman Sires.

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